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and pathetic of ruins. Right in front of him is the scene of the battle of Salamis. Beyond the hills to the right the Persians were beaten back at Marathon, and the history of Western civilization so made possible. In a little grove of trees in the midst of the blue fields in front of him were the Academy of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle. The white road stretching across the plain is the highway to Eleusis, while off of it to the left is Sunium. Under the hill is the great theatre in which immortal dramas were read to the delight of the Athenian people. Just below, and almost within a stone's throw, is Mars Hill, where the strident voice of Paul the Apostle may almost be heard thundering out, "Ye men of Athens!" Just beyond, still stand the remains of the very platform from which Demosthenes appealed to the Athenian people to beat back the Macedonian tyrant. All these, and a hundred other scenes and associations of hardly less significance, are within sight. As the western sun sinks to its setting the visitor with a soul will learn both the full significance of the city with the violet crown and what it means to visit the home of a marvelous and a lasting civilization.

Athens could be the capital city of a new kingdom of light, and to its defence and upholding there might go as crusaders high-spirited and ambitious youth from every land, until the broken links in our history of the understanding of civilization are restored. This kingdom would be alight with liberty, for man "secures his freedom by keeping hold always of the past and treasuring up the best out of the past, so that in a present that may be angry or sordid he can call back memories of calm or of high passion, in a present that requires resignation or courage he can call back the spirit with which brave men long ago faced the same evils. He draws out of the past high thoughts and great emotions; he also draws the strength that comes from communion or brotherhood"⁴.

C. K.

WHY LATIN?

The Chairman of the Latin Section asks me to address you, teachers of Latin, just because I myself am not a Latin teacher. To Latinists in the Public Schools, he says, is constantly being put the question, Why Latin? Why not a live subject, or at least a living language? And he feels, I take it, that an answer to this recurrent question could come more convincingly, if not more capably, from one who is not professionally committed to the subject. For my part, I am very glad to raise a voice for a study for which so much can be said.

First of all, the question is a part of a more general query: Why should we have any liberal education at all? Why not simply the technical subjects? Why not convert our Schools into apprentice shops? The just reply is, of course, that we have liberal Schools in order that we may maintain liberalized minds. We happen to live in a democracy; democracy rests its case wholly upon the assumption that its citizens can think freemen's thoughts, responsible for self, fair-minded towards others; and for the maintenance of such a power in society liberal education is the one instrument. Furthermore, it is the liberalism of the *litterae humaniores* which is a vital core of this education,

a liberalism whose essential meaning is acquaintance with human minds engaged in thinking men's thought. Natural science owns a place in liberal training, but it is a place distinctly subordinate. Why study an amoeba when you might be conversing with Socrates? When we come to assess the whole range of human values, heights and depths, can there indeed be a moment's question as to what is "the proper study of mankind"? Certainly for us, who are citizens of a democracy, the axis of our education can be but the one theme, man's discovery of self-control through self-knowledge, of which the record is classic letters. Democracy was a Greek, law a Roman invention; and it is not for nothing that the classical façade and the Roman arch are the external dignities of our public edifices, that the emblems of Justice and the maxims of our law are from the Mediterranean ancients, and that our mottoes of State are inscribed in the Latin tongue. If, then, you are asked, Why Latin? Let your first answer be, *For training in citizenship*, in American citizenship; it is the straightest path.

Perchance, you will be saying, But this is not language; it is history, law, and letters! Precisely; it is history, law, letters, philosophy—the *litterae humaniores*, the study of the human mind at work upon man's great and foundational problems; it is just this which is the most capable training for citizenship that we know. And it is just this that spells *Latin*.

Now in saying this I do not mean again to cant the rote dear to the hearts of teachers of language: that a literature cannot be understood in translation, that, therefore, it must be the *ipsissima verba* or nothing. The measure of truth which is in this contention is generally and often childishly exaggerated. It holds in a very important sense for poetry; it holds again for the more recondite phases of scholarship; beyond these it is of little worth, and it cannot be convincing to the general. But in another and more psychological sense I would maintain that the understanding of things classical should come through study of the classical tongues. Such study is exacting and close; it calls for attention. There is an essential difference in the thinking processes involved in the translation of a text and in the perusal of a translation, even if the result be the same English formulation. Translation is in the creative and active mode of thought, if I may so put it, and it engenders active and creative ideas, ideas which gain a double power from their duplex source. Any act of comparison demands judgment; here, on important matters, if, as should be, important texts are employed, the mind is constantly cultivating its powers of judgment. Furthermore, as every psychologist knows, intensity of effort reacts in mental images at once more intense and more deeply graven: the mind's complexion is the reflection of its hours of application, and its living thought is represented most truly by those thoughts with which we have most directly lived. It is for these psychological reasons that I maintain the pragmatic value of intimacy with the classic tongues: if the thought which the Classics express is worth having, it is worth *getting*;

⁴Gilbert Murray, *Essays and Addresses* (London: 1921), p. 13.

⁵This address was delivered at a meeting of the Latin Section of the Nebraska State Teachers' Association, at Omaha, November 10, 1921.

especially where those who possess through acquisition doubly possess. If you will consider carefully what I have just said, you will perceive that here in an enforced sense Latin is training for American citizenship; not only are the matters of its texts important for us, but the manner of their study, through translation, develops just those qualities of judgment and action which we so prize under the name of initiative.

Training for citizenship, then, I regard as the first answer which the teacher of Latin should give to the School patron asking him to justify his subject. There are two others which are of no less significance.

America should not only represent a democracy; it should also develop a civilization. Now I do not believe that any wise person will question the fact that civilization can neither grow nor be maintained without the presence and the activities of scholars. Civilization is so largely a thing of tradition, a cult of the past even, that without a sort of priesthood of learning it cannot exist. Scholars we must have if we are to maintain ourselves above the ever perilous brink of barbarism; and the road to scholarship—this, again, none can question—for us of European source leads oftener and more fundamentally through Latin than through any other instrument. I do not think that this needs arguing. Latin literature is not the greatest in the Occident, although it is one of the greatest; but the Latin language opens more doors to the history and the letters of the West than does any other, and in any case it is indispensable to the scholar. Our Schools, therefore, must keep ever ready the way for the youth—rare if he be—whose aptitude and inclination may lead him into the path of learning. Scholars are few, but they are precious; without them civilization must fade and the State dissolve in barbarian night.

This matter of training for scholarship is so important for society that it will fully justify all the waste incurred in the instruction of the indifferent many for the sake of discovering the capable few. But I am well aware that the public which can be made to understand how this can be is helplessly small; not from teachers themselves does the fact often get much more than lip service, and even those zealous for scholarship are frequently blind to its ends. Certainly the great taxpaying public is and will remain incorrigibly unconvinced that the scholar is more than a not very glittering ornament of the social order, and as for the youth who feels himself to be among the sacrificed many, the rebelliousness of his soul is as inevitable as it is natural. Public and pupil must be convinced of the desirability of Latin instruction for some other than the scholar's cause.

Fortunately for this cause, there is a more direct and a wholly sound appeal, within which I should find my third response to Why Latin? It is usually not necessary to argue with either pupil or public for the need of some language study; the place of foreign language in the curriculum is sufficiently a matter of custom to excite little opposition. The Latin teacher, therefore—and this, I take it, is his commonest call—

is but asked to justify his subject as against the other languages, and in particular to show that Latin should have a place along with, or before, the great vernaculars of the modern world. Now this should not be difficult even with the ordinarily obtuse. For there are cogent reasons why Latin is to be preferred to any other foreign language as a Public School discipline. One of the minor, but none the less effective of these reasons is the fact that Latin is and is likely to continue to be better taught than are the Modern Languages; centuries of usage have given its pedagogy a scientific cast which the others acquire mainly in so far as they imitate the Latinist model. This means a maximum return on the effort expended, for teacher and pupil alike; it means instructional economy, which is surely in itself a practical appeal. But over and beyond this, of all languages which are studied as by the great majority of School and College youths languages are studied, short of a reading mastery, Latin is the only one, I believe, which can show a gain overcoming the waste. This is because it is structurally and materially so integral to English. It was my fortune for a number of years to be professionally a lexicographer of the English language, and I will do no more than suggest that you ask your next inquisitor, anent Latin, to run through but the dictionary pages which record our words in the letter *a*, if he would see to what an extent English is a Latin tongue. About four out of five of our English words are of Latin origin, and great numbers of these are Latinous in sense, that is, they demand some knowledge of Latin word-formation if they are to be correctly used. Moreover, English grammar (I believe that it is rarely mentioned by pedagogues nowadays except through euphemism) gets a better understanding via the tough path of Latin conjugations and constructions than along any of the seemingly nearer, and mainly untrod, courses. The language of a people is the most precious instrument of its culture; no labor can be too great which is devoted to the whetting and refinement of public skill in the use of this instrument; and no instruction will give speedier or more effectual returns herein than will elementary Latin. A year with the grammar of this language, even for the boy who goes not a step beyond, is worth all the time and effort it costs; and I do not know of any other foreign language of which this can be said. Proof, if proof be asked, will be found in the records of any College, where the ranking students in English will consistently be found to be those who have come up with Latin preparation².

I have given, then, three reasons justifying Latin in the curricula of our free Public Schools, three answers to Why Latin? The first is that Latin is demanded for the best training for American citizenship. The second is that Latin is a *sine qua non* of the cultivation of that scholarship which alone can maintain an American civilization. The third is that the study of Latin is, in the best sense, a study of English, and that

²For some evidence on this subject see the following papers: English and the Latin Question, Stuart P. Sherman, THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 5, 201-203, 209-213; The Teaching of English and the Study of the Classics, Lane Cooper, THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 8, 178-182. C. K.

best through it may we keep fine-tempered and resilient our American tongue.

One word I would add in closing. There is a sorry *ad prejudiciam* fallacy in the description of Latin as 'dead'. Languages which have great thoughts expressed in them do not die, and Latin has had two great periods, the Classical and the Mediaeval, when it was the vehicle of great thoughts³. Its lives, indeed, are as many as the wide human interests which its letters have touched, and law, politics, and religion are but a few of its vivifications. Even Latin teachers sometimes overlook the range and currency of their subject's vitality; and this, I fear, is a fault; for at least in their day the life of the language is in their hands; it is through them that Latin lives.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA HARTLEY BURR ALEXANDER

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER'S LETTERS TO TEACHERS

Professor Alexander is head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska. In *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 7. 33-35 I printed an abstract, with comments, of an article by him, entitled *Youth and the Classics*, which appeared in the *Nebraska State Journal*, September 17, 1913. In 1919, Dr. Alexander published, through The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, a volume entitled *Letters to Teachers and Other Papers of the Hour* (pages vii + 256). Parts of this book are distinctly of interest and profit to teachers of the Classics. One of the letters bears the caption *The Humanities* (55-63). In Part II, Dr. Alexander discusses *Foreign Language Study* (169-189). He would himself have foreign languages studied because they minister so decidedly to education. There are two kinds of knowledge—knowledge of men and knowledge of nature, or, to put it differently, knowledge of human thought, and knowledge of the human environment. For knowledge of men we must turn, he says, to the humanities. The humanities mean a knowledge of books. The Liberal College aims, or tries to aim, to open up the privilege of books, not of any and every book, but of the best books. Here it is worth while to quote Dr. Alexander's exact words (173-175):

... Many of these (and may the praise of posterity long be to their makers!) are in the English tongue, by right of creation; but many more are in other languages, languages which must be learned—*partially*, as languages are always learned—in order that they may be partially understood. I know, of course, that the English-speaking world is now rich in translations of foreign masterpieces, and many of them superb translations; and I know that a very great treasure may be derived from the study of these works in translation: if any question this, one need but mention King James's Version, and he is answered. But it is also true, as everyone who has ever really caught the spirit of a foreign tongue will attest, that at the best a translation is but a pale reflection of its original; or if (as at times happens) it better the original, it is essentially another

work. It is hard to say this convincingly; but if we accept Lord Bryce's criterion, that the best judge is the man who has first made the acquaintance of a work in translation and has afterwards learned to know it in the original, we shall discover that the testimony to the worth of the effort is virtually unanimous.

Nor should it be necessary to repeat the obvious in saying that we do not make acquaintance with the ideas expressed in a foreign tongue merely for their formal (or, as a scholastic might say it, their intellectual) value; the power of a conception comes from the vigor of the context in which it is set, and a main part of that context is inevitably conveyed by the color of its native dialect. Philosophy, because it seeks the universal, should suffer less than other types of literature from this defect; but even in Jowett's splendid English something of his natural glory is faded from Plato.

It is for the sake of literature, and knowledge of literature, that we encourage the study of foreign languages as an essential part of a humanistic education; nor has the study any other justification besides knowledge of literature which will perpetuate it beyond the bare limits of practical necessity. But it needs no other. Literature—imaginative, political, historical, philosophical—is a thing of such supreme importance to civilization that every effort and every premium we can give to the cultivation of its tradition is but small measure of its value; and I mean by this value, not merely its return to the individual who acquires the knowledge, but its far richer returns to the whole society in which that individual lives. Colleges exist for the training of literate citizens, for the reason that literate citizens are indispensable to the good state.

Having thus considered in its general aspect the question of foreign language study in the Schools and Colleges, Dr. Alexander then proceeds, on pages 176-189, to consider "what languages are most economical, yielding the surest return for the effort expended. . .". Of the foreign languages, he puts Latin first. For this he advances several reasons:

... it is certainly easier to get effective preparatory teaching in Latin than in modern languages. . . . a small acquaintance with Latin is of more general value than is a small acquaintance with any other language. . . so that, on the whole, if but a single year could be devoted to language study Latin by all means is the language to recommend. . . . No sane critic will deny that for aesthetic and philosophical value alone no literature equals the Greek; nor will any sound critic question the fact that Latin owns a similar primacy in the domain of history and politics, while it may be regarded as a strong rival for the second place with respect to artistic and philosophical significance. It is probable that even now there are more books and documents in Latin than in any other language, taking the world over; and Latin possesses the unique value of opening to the student two of the greatest periods of human history—the period of pagan and imperial Rome and the great period of mediaeval Christianity.

C. K.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Scholars who are familiar with Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* well know its importance in the world's literature during both the earlier and the later Middle Ages. In King Alfred, Boethius found a sympathetic interpreter and an ardent admirer. The

³On this theme reference may be made to a summary, with comments, *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 5.33-34, 41-42, of a paper by Professor J. P. Postgate, *Dead Language and Dead Languages*. c. x.